

## **Historic, Archive Document**

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



Miss Colver,  
Main Library.

# THE AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

*A Brief Summary of Economic Conditions*

ISSUED MONTHLY BY THE BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

LIBRARY  
RECEIVED  
★ APR 12 1929 ★

CERTIFICATE: By direction of the Secretary of Agriculture the matter contained herein is published as statistical information and is required for the proper transaction of the public business. Free distribution is limited to copies "necessary in the transaction of public business required by law." Subscription price 25 cents per year payable in cash or money order to the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

Washington, D. C.

APRIL 1, 1929

Volume 13, No. 4

## SPRING WORK BEGINNING—FEW SHIFTS IN CROPS

The latter part of March brought some favorable weather throughout much of the North, melted the snow, dried up the land, and permitted a start of farm work. A considerable part of the oats acreage has been sown and preparations are going forward for the whole crop program. In the South, the extremely heavy rains continued to hold up farm work and caused damaging floods in many river valleys. Winter wheat is starting up rapidly. Farmers generally report that less winter-wheat acreage than usual will be abandoned this spring. Fruit trees have shown about normal progress, early varieties being now in bloom well up into the North.

A few days ago this bureau completed its annual inquiry from about 50,000 farmers who reported their intentions, as of March 1, regarding the planting of spring crops. No information was collected on cotton, since that is prohibited by law, but of the other main crops it appears that the intention of farmers is to plant a slightly greater (2 per cent) total acreage than was grown last year.

The low price of durum wheat has influenced growers in the spring-wheat territory to plan a reduction of 20 per cent in durum acreage. This would be made up by increases of 8 per cent more bread wheat, 10 per cent more flax, and 6 per cent more barley, the prospective combinations varying in different sections from Minnesota to Montana.

Potato growers, influenced by the very low price of their crop, plan about an 11 per cent reduction in acreage. This is the opposite of the story last spring when an increase was planned and carried out against all warnings and was followed by a crop that broke the market. The decrease contemplated this year should help in bringing the main potato crop back into line for more profitable prices.

The South indicates its intention to reduce rice acreage 7 per cent but to increase sweet potatoes and peanuts each 6 per cent. The plans for as much as 22 per cent increase in Burley tobacco acreage might make possible a crop so large as to hurt prices materially.

In the case of feedstuffs, the reports indicate intended plantings of a slightly smaller acreage of corn and oats and slightly more grain sorghums than last year. The acreage of hay shows a prospective increase of about 3 per cent, this being most striking in the northern and eastern States, where farmers are trying to build up their clover and alfalfa meadows, which were killed out a year ago.

On the whole, it appears that the general crop program this spring is well balanced, barring some possible overplanting of spring wheat, Burley tobacco and, in certain areas, beans and cabbage.

## AVERAGE PRICES OF FARM PRODUCTS RECEIVED BY PRODUCERS

Actual prices received by producers at local farm markets as reported to the division of crop and livestock estimates of this bureau. Average of reports covering the United States, weighted according to relative importance of district and State.

	5-year average, August, 1909- July, 1914	Febru- ary average 1910- 1914	Febru- ary, 1928	Janu- ary, 1929	Febru- ary, 1929
Cotton, per pound-----cents--	12. 4	12. 3	17. 0	17. 9	18. 0
Corn, per bushel-----do-----	64. 2	60. 1	79. 0	80. 2	86. 8
Wheat, per bushel-----do-----	88. 4	89. 2	116. 2	98. 5	104. 2
Hay, per ton-----dollars--	11. 87	12. 02	10. 24	11. 61	12. 06
Potatoes, per bushel-----cents--	69. 7	66. 3	96. 2	58. 9	59. 5
Oats, per bushel-----do-----	39. 9	39. 8	51. 3	43. 7	47. 0
Beef, cattle, per 100 pounds -----dollars--	5. 22	5. 11	8. 72	8. 97	8. 89
Hogs, per 100 pounds-----do-----	7. 23	7. 12	7. 62	8. 18	8. 88
Eggs, per dozen-----cents--	21. 5	23. 9	29. 1	33. 0	31. 9
Butter, per pound-----do-----	25. 5	26. 6	43. 9	45. 3	45. 2
Butterfat, per pound-----do-----			46. 0	47. 6	47. 8
Wool, per pound-----do-----	17. 7	18. 5	34. 4	35. 9	35. 9
Veal calves, per 100 pounds -----dollars--	6. 75	5. 77	11. 30	12. 20	12. 17
Lambs, per 100 pounds-----do-----	5. 91	5. 95	11. 90	12. 23	12. 60
Horses, each-----do-----	142. 00	143. 00	82. 00	77. 00	79. 00

The farm price of hogs on February 15, at \$8.88 per hundred pounds, was about 8.5 per cent higher than on January 15 and approximately 16.5 per cent above a year ago. From January 15 to February 15 the farm price advanced about 11 per cent in the Corn Belt, 6 per cent in the Far West, 4 per cent in the North Atlantic States, 3 per cent in the South Central Division and 1 per cent along the South Atlantic Seaboard. These upturns in farm prices were accompanied by indications of a 9 per cent reduction in the inventory of hogs on farms on January 1 as compared with January 1, 1928. Receipts of hogs at seven primary markets during the 4-week period ending February 16 were about 15 per cent smaller than during the corresponding period last year. Due to advances in the farm prices of both corn and hogs, the corn-hog ratio for the United States, at 10.2 was the same on February 15 as on January 15, while the ratio for Iowa advanced slightly from 11.4 to 11.5. The ratios on February 15 compare with 9.6 for the United States and 9.7 for Iowa in February of last year.

Of the grains, corn led in the magnitude of price change from January 15 to February 15, advancing approximately 8 per cent during the month. The advance in the farm price was fairly general over the United States, except for a slight decline along the Pacific coast. On February 15, the farm price of corn was about 10 per cent above a year ago. The principal factor affecting the farm price advance since January 15 has probably been the continuance of a relatively high export demand. Receipts at 14 primary markets during the week ending February 9 were about 15 per cent smaller than the



average for the two preceding weeks and commercial stocks continue to be materially below those of a year ago.

The farm price of wheat advanced about 6 per cent from January 15 to February 15, reaching \$1 per bushel for the first time since July, 1928. However, the farm price is still approximately 10 per cent below February of last year. The advance in the farm price since January 15 has been accompanied by a decline in commercial wheat stocks in this country and indications of some damage to domestic and European winter-wheat crops, due to storms and cold weather with inadequate snow covering.

### PRICE INDEXES FOR FEBRUARY, 1929

Farm products figures from this bureau; commodity groups from Bureau of Labor Statistics (latter shown to nearest whole number). Shows year ago and latest available month.

#### FARM PRODUCTS

[Prices at the farm; August, 1909–July, 1914=100]

	February, 1928	January, 1929	February, 1929	Month's trend
Cotton.....	137	144	145	Higher.
Corn.....	123	125	135	Do.
Wheat.....	131	111	118	Do.
Hay.....	86	98	102	Do.
Potatoes.....	138	84	85	Do.
Beef cattle.....	168	172	171	Lower.
Hogs.....	105	113	123	Higher.
Eggs.....	135	153	148	Lower.
Butter.....	172	178	177	Do.
Wool.....	193	202	202	Unchanged.

#### COMMODITY GROUPS

[Wholesale prices; 1926=100]

	February, 1928	January, 1929	February, 1929	Month's trend
Farm products.....	104	106	105	Lower.
Foods.....	99	99	98	Do.
Hides and leather products...	124	114	109	Do.
Textile products.....	97	96	96	Unchanged.
Fuel and lighting.....	81	82	81	Lower.
Metals and metal products...	98	104	104	Unchanged.
Building materials.....	91	97	98	Higher.
Chemicals and drugs.....	96	96	96	Unchanged.
House-furnishing goods.....	98	97	97	Do.
All commodities.....	96	97	97	Do.

## GENERAL TREND OF PRICES AND WAGES

[1910-1914=100]

Year and month	Whole-sale prices of all commodities <sup>1</sup>	Industrial wages <sup>2</sup>	Prices paid by farmers for commodities used in—			Farm wages	Taxes <sup>3</sup>
			Living	Production	Living production		
1910-----	103	-----	98	98	98	97	-----
1911-----	95	-----	100	103	101	97	-----
1912-----	101	-----	101	98	100	101	-----
1913-----	102	-----	100	102	100	104	-----
1914-----	100	-----	102	99	101	101	100
1915-----	103	101	107	103	106	102	102
1916-----	129	114	125	121	123	112	104
1917-----	180	129	148	152	150	140	106
1918-----	198	160	180	176	178	176	118
1919-----	210	185	214	192	205	206	130
1920-----	230	222	227	175	206	239	155
1921-----	150	203	165	142	156	150	217
1922-----	152	197	160	140	152	146	232
1923-----	156	214	161	142	153	166	246
1924-----	152	218	162	143	154	166	249
1925-----	162	223	165	149	159	168	250
1926-----	154	229	164	144	156	171	253
1927-----	149	231	161	144	154	170	-----
1928-----	153	232	-----	-----	-----	169	-----
February—							
1921-----	163	211	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
1922-----	144	190	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
1923-----	160	204	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
1924-----	154	218	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
1925-----	164	220	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
1926-----	158	225	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
1927-----	149	231	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
1928-----	151	230	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
1928							
July-----	154	230	-----	-----	-----	170	-----
August-----	155	231	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
September-----	157	234	163	144	156	-----	-----
October-----	153	234	-----	-----	-----	175	-----
November-----	151	233	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
December-----	151	237	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
1929							
January-----	152	234	-----	-----	-----	162	-----
February-----	151	236	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics. Index for 1928 obtained by multiplying new series by 156.6.

<sup>2</sup> Average weekly earnings, New York State factories. June, 1914=100.

<sup>3</sup> Index of estimate of total taxes paid on all farm property. 1914=100.

## GENERAL TREND OF PRICES AND PURCHASING POWER

[On 5-year base; August, 1909–July, 1914=100]

Year and month	Index numbers of farm prices							Prices paid by farmers for commodities bought <sup>1</sup>	Ratio of prices received to prices paid
	Grains	Fruits and vegetables	Meat animals	Dairy products	Poultry products	Cotton and cottonseed	All groups, 30 items		
1910.....	104	91	103	100	104	113	103	98	106
1911.....	96	106	87	97	91	101	95	101	93
1912.....	106	110	95	103	101	87	99	100	99
1913.....	92	92	108	100	101	97	100	100	99
1914.....	103	100	112	100	105	85	102	101	101
1915.....	120	83	104	98	103	78	100	106	95
1916.....	126	123	120	102	116	119	117	123	95
1917.....	217	202	173	125	157	187	176	150	118
1918.....	226	162	202	152	185	245	200	178	112
1919.....	231	189	206	173	206	247	209	205	102
1920.....	231	249	173	188	222	248	205	206	99
1921.....	112	148	108	148	161	101	116	156	75
1922.....	105	152	113	134	139	156	124	152	81
1923.....	114	136	106	148	145	216	135	153	88
1924.....	129	124	109	134	147	211	134	154	87
1925.....	156	160	139	137	161	177	147	159	92
1926.....	129	189	146	136	156	122	136	156	87
1927.....	128	155	139	138	141	128	131	154	85
1928.....	130	146	150	140	150	152	139	-----	-----
February—									
1921.....	136	127	119	165	185	89	128	-----	-----
1922.....	102	173	108	134	140	128	118	-----	-----
1923.....	114	122	110	151	151	215	136	(152)	89
1924.....	113	123	102	150	157	247	136	(154)	89
1925.....	178	131	126	134	166	183	146	(158)	92
1926.....	140	218	146	143	145	142	143	(157)	92
1927.....	122	142	143	143	145	94	127	(154)	82
1928.....	128	153	139	145	144	141	135	(154)	87
1928									
July.....	142	156	157	134	134	170	145	(156)	93
August.....	120	137	162	135	140	153	139	(156)	89
September..	117	127	174	141	156	142	141	156	91
October.....	116	114	160	143	168	147	137	<sup>2</sup> 156	<sup>2</sup> 88
November...	110	109	150	144	185	146	134	<sup>2</sup> 156	<sup>2</sup> 86
December...	112	108	143	146	197	148	134	<sup>2</sup> 156	<sup>2</sup> 86
1929									
January....	115	109	146	145	161	148	133	<sup>2</sup> 156	<sup>2</sup> 86
February...	123	111	150	144	158	149	136	<sup>2</sup> 156	<sup>2</sup> 88

<sup>1</sup> These index numbers are based on retail prices paid by farmers for commodities used in living and production, reported quarterly for March, June, September, and December. The indexes for other months are straight interpolations between the successive quarterly indexes.

<sup>2</sup> Preliminary.



## THE TREND OF MOVEMENT TO MARKET

Figures show wheat, corn, hogs, cattle, sheep receipts at primary markets; butter receipts at five markets, compiled by this bureau.

	Receipts					
	Wheat	Corn	Hogs	Cattle	Sheep	Butter
	<i>1,000 bushels</i>	<i>1,000 bushels</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000 pounds</i>
Total—						
1920-----	332, 314	210, 332	42, 121	22, 197	23, 538	402, 755
1921-----	435, 606	340, 908	41, 101	19, 787	24, 168	468, 150
1922-----	413, 106	378, 598	44, 068	23, 218	22, 364	526, 714
1923-----	386, 430	271, 858	55, 330	23, 211	22, 025	545, 380
1924-----	482, 007	278, 719	55, 414	23, 695	22, 201	587, 477
1925-----	346, 381	223, 604	43, 929	24, 067	22, 100	574, 489
1926-----	362, 876	234, 873	39, 772	23, 872	23, 868	572, 935
1927-----	455, 991	241, 245	41, 411	22, 763	23, 935	581, 592
1928-----	495, 450	335, 149	46, 527	21, 477	25, 597	578, 845
February—						
1920-----	16, 397	24, 251	3, 422	1, 480	1, 416	24, 019
1921-----	21, 384	26, 026	4, 009	1, 190	1, 516	23, 962
1922-----	21, 851	59, 558	3, 613	1, 416	1, 400	32, 309
1923-----	21, 533	31, 901	4, 492	1, 427	1, 366	33, 611
1924-----	20, 165	44, 689	5, 335	1, 457	1, 412	40, 221
1925-----	18, 493	20, 833	4, 558	1, 530	1, 388	35, 181
1926-----	15, 923	25, 718	3, 372	1, 551	1, 486	39, 507
1927-----	19, 462	24, 499	3, 308	1, 555	1, 501	38, 375
1928-----	21, 403	44, 453	5, 267	1, 516	1, 669	41, 140
1928						
March-----	24, 639	39, 520	4, 639	1, 465	1, 520	45, 748
April-----	17, 483	19, 724	3, 483	1, 684	1, 591	44, 721
May-----	24, 718	23, 289	3, 723	1, 799	1, 952	54, 427
June-----	13, 883	18, 345	3, 548	1, 558	1, 913	69, 650
July-----	64, 846	24, 535	2, 924	1, 650	1, 898	65, 145
August-----	78, 372	20, 485	2, 523	1, 829	2, 362	55, 339
September-----	72, 579	19, 608	2, 600	2, 191	3, 386	44, 969
October-----	82, 346	15, 305	3, 666	2, 541	3, 938	41, 884
November-----	40, 901	28, 641	4, 075	1, 963	2, 053	36, 616
December-----	31, 967	44, 128	4, 773	1, 510	1, 610	36, 863
1929						
January-----	21, 307	37, 993	5, 061	1, 635	1, 876	44, 922
February-----	26, 154	31, 818	3, 922	1, 191	1, 543	41, 557

The movement of wheat to market during February was relatively heavier than in same month of recent years, while corn movement was below last year. Fewer hogs and cattle went to market than in February last year, slightly fewer sheep and lambs and about the same quantity of butter.



## THE TREND OF EXPORT MOVEMENT

Compiled from the Department of Commerce reports by division of statistical research of this bureau.

Year and month	Wheat, <sup>1</sup> including flour	Tobacco (leaf)	Bacon, <sup>2</sup> hams, and shoulders	Lard	Total <sup>3</sup> meats	Cotton, <sup>4</sup> running bales
Total:	1,000 bushels	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 bales
1920-----	311, 601	467, 662	821, 922	612, 250	1, 043, 500	6, 111
1921-----	359, 021	515, 353	647, 680	868, 942	786, 280	6, 385
1922-----	235, 307	430, 908	631, 452	766, 950	733, 832	6, 015
1923-----	175, 190	474, 500	828, 890	1, 035, 382	958, 472	5, 224
1924-----	241, 454	546, 555	637, 980	944, 095	729, 832	6, 653
1925-----	138, 784	468, 471	467, 459	688, 829	547, 361	8, 362
1926-----	193, 971	478, 773	351, 591	698, 961	428, 613	8, 916
1927-----	228, 576	506, 252	237, 720	681, 303	302, 795	9, 199
1928-----	151, 976	575, 408	248, 278	759, 722	315, 586	8, 546
February:						
1920-----	10, 832	39, 764	100, 109	36, 645	125, 634	634
1921-----	23, 279	41, 735	47, 485	91, 841	61, 486	484
1922-----	11, 231	25, 846	56, 003	75, 520	62, 647	326
1923-----	12, 473	24, 380	64, 488	89, 055	75, 023	355
1924-----	10, 326	38, 414	81, 108	99, 910	90, 461	470
1925-----	11, 784	23, 806	48, 041	60, 363	55, 438	792
1926-----	4, 742	47, 147	37, 187	65, 356	45, 292	545
1927-----	8, 997	46, 840	19, 476	49, 884	24, 313	979
1928-----	6, 725	41, 355	22, 175	79, 872	27, 850	614
1928						
March-----	7, 492	45, 957	28, 016	79, 929	34, 666	596
April-----	7, 880	41, 218	22, 074	56, 554	28, 607	467
May-----	8, 793	38, 726	21, 711	55, 540	28, 148	578
June-----	8, 230	30, 278	23, 850	53, 436	29, 014	444
July-----	7, 193	19, 417	25, 851	52, 940	31, 268	331
August-----	14, 775	26, 200	14, 913	50, 658	31, 300	253
September-----	22, 732	56, 953	13, 956	46, 158	18, 685	810
October-----	28, 548	88, 109	10, 055	59, 865	15, 724	1, 241
November-----	16, 195	77, 599	14, 710	67, 716	20, 287	1, 428
December-----	12, 053	67, 583	18, 885	86, 358	23, 040	1, 058
1929						
January-----	9, 833	44, 166	24, 669	89, 932	31, 684	787
February-----	8, 948	48, 390	19, 512	65, 924	27, 129	613

<sup>1</sup> Wheat flour is converted on a basis of 4.7 bushels of grain equal 1 barrel of flour.

<sup>2</sup> Includes Cumberland and Wiltshire sides.

<sup>3</sup> Includes fresh, canned, and pickled beef; bacon, hams, and shoulders; fresh, canned, and pickled pork; fresh mutton and lamb.

<sup>4</sup> Excludes linters.

## COLD-STORAGE SITUATION

[March 1 holdings (shows nearest million; i. e., 000,000 omitted)]

Commodity	5-year average	Year ago	Month ago	Mar. 1, 1929
Apples.....barrels--	5	4	7	5
Creamery butter.....pounds--	17	14	25	12
American cheese.....do----	38	37	58	49
Case eggs.....cases--	<sup>1</sup> 60	66	248	11
Total poultry.....pounds--	110	103	102	89
Total beef.....do----	92	64	94	89
Total pork.....do----	782	886	838	945
Lard.....do----	99	121	141	175
Lamb and mutton, frozen .....pounds--	3	4	4	3
Total meats.....do----	951	1, 025	1, 025	1, 128

<sup>1</sup> 3 figures omitted.

Apple stocks were reduced during February by 2,367,000 barrels. This compares with a reduction for the same period a year ago of 1,608,000 barrels. Holdings were 809,000 above March 1 last year, but 260,000 less than the 5-year average.

The out-of-storage movement of creamery butter was 12,836,000 pounds as compared with 13,869,000 a year ago. Stocks were 2,493,000 pounds less than the corresponding date last year and 5,550,000 pounds less than the 5-year average.

Stocks of all varieties of cheese were reduced by 10,161,000 pounds. The movement a year ago was 7,078,000 pounds. Stocks were in excess of last year by 15,071,000 pounds and of the 5-year average by 11,548,000.

The low seasonal point for case-egg holdings was reached with 11,000 cases on hand.

Frozen eggs were withdrawn from storage at the rate of 9,775,000 pounds. Holdings were 6,918,000 pounds in excess of a year ago and 15,070,000 pounds greater than the 5-year average.

The out-movement of frozen poultry was 13,300,000 pounds, which compares with 14,660,000 for the same period a year ago. Stocks were 14,414,000 pounds less than a year ago and 21,402,000 less than the 5-year average.

There was a decrease in frozen and cured beef stocks of 5,228,000 pounds. Holdings were approximately 25,000,000 pounds in excess of a year ago, but 3,293,000 less than the 5-year average.

Stocks of frozen and cured pork increased by 106,401,000 pounds, the excess above last year being 58,765,000 pounds and above the 5-year average 162,505,000.

Lard stocks were increased by 34,242,000 pounds and were 53,686,000 pounds greater than March 1 last year and 75,795,000 heavier than the 5-year average.

WM. BROXTON,  
*Cold-Storage Report Section, B. A. E.*

## SUMMARY OF DAIRY STATISTICS

[Million pounds, 000,000 omitted]

## PRODUCTION

	February			January to February, inclusive		
	1929	1928	Per cent change	1929	1928	Per cent change
Creamery butter----	98	97	+0.3	200	199	+1.0
Farm butter-----	33	33	-1.7	68	69	-1.7
Total butter-----	130	131	-0.2	269	268	+0.2
Cheese-----	21	24	-15.0	42	48	-12.8
Condensed and evaporated milk--	125	131	-5.0	234	234	-0.3
Total milk equiv- alent-----	3,258	3,318	-1.8	6,652	6,701	-0.7

## APPARENT CONSUMPTION

[Including production, changes in stocks, and net imports or exports]

Butter-----	143	144	-0.9	305	301	+1.2
Cheese-----	36	37	-0.5	77	74	+3.8
Condensed and evaporated milk--	137	150	-8.5	259	267	-3.1
Total milk equiv- alent-----	3,715	3,775	-1.6	7,813	7,732	+1.1

T. R. PIRTLE,  
*Division of Dairy and Poultry Products, B. A. E.*

## THE DAIRY SITUATION

Several conditions feature the dairy situation as the 1928-29 season draws to a close. For the most part, these are strengthening factors, and that their influence was not more clearly shown in price changes was largely because any elements of strength are always offset at this time of the year by the uncertainties of an approaching new season. It is usually expected that March and April markets will be sensitive, more or less irregular, and that in general, price tendencies will be downward.

In view of the severe winter, which was experienced in the principal dairy sections, production has held up remarkably well. For the country as a whole, butter production is estimated to have been



slightly heavier in January, and again in February, than last year, and in some of the leading States, such as Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa, the increases were large. What was true of butter, however, was not true of cheese, for it is estimated that in February there was a decrease of 15 per cent under last year, making the net decrease for the calendar year some 12 per cent. Reports indicate that condensed and evaporated milk dropped off in February also, so that the butter situation is unusual in view of what occurred to these other manufactured products.

Unusually light stocks of butter in cold storage, and a fairly active trade movement, were factors which lent support to butter markets. Total United States stocks on March 1 of approximately 12,000,000 pounds were not only 2,000,000 pounds less than last year, but were 5,000,000 pounds less than the March 1 average of the past five years. Further reductions, since the first of the month, make present stocks of no importance whatever. Price changes in foreign markets, similar to those in domestic markets, have kept the differential at a point where no import business has developed. So far this month (March 25) the trend of butter prices has been downward. Opening at 51 cents in New York, each change has been a reduction, except in two instances when one-half cent advances occurred, and the prevailing price is now 47 cents. Since the first week of the month, prices have been running somewhat lower than last year, although the average for the month will probably be pretty close to that of last year on account of the more regular trend. As has been mentioned before, this season's trend has been unusually regular, and the difference of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  cents between high and low, which developed this month, represents the extreme so far this year. During the first three months of 1928, there was a difference of 8 cents between high and low prices. Another point may be mentioned regarding the current butter price situation, namely, the very narrow range between prices of fancy butter and undergrades. The present difference between 88-score and 92-score prices at New York is but three-fourths cent, compared with an average difference last month of over 2 cents. The fact is that under grade prices have shown practically no change, while fancy grades have declined. The present narrow range is in part due to a somewhat increased percentage of fancy butter in receipts at wholesale markets at a time when there is unusual demand for medium to undergrade goods. The latter is attributed to efforts of dealers to find butter which their customers can sell in consumer outlets without having to increase prices. Part of this trade may have been using storage butter. This situation is bound to change.

In view of the heavy stocks in storage, cheese price declines, which some of the trade may have anticipated, have not occurred. Changes, since the 1st of February, have all been upward, and present prices are exactly the same as a year ago. Last year, there were no price changes from March 1 until late in May, but what will occur this year remains to be seen. At least, one supporting factor is to be found in production, which as previously indicated, is running considerably below last year. Canned-milk markets show no marked change from a month ago. Manufacturers' stocks, on March 1, indicate a reduction in February of 22,800,000 pounds, which is 7,000,000 pounds greater than the average February reduction. This, along with lighter production, places canned milk in a position favorable



to sellers. Fluid-milk prices announced for March were for the most part unchanged, although for the Philadelphia territory, which is one of the most important fluid-milk areas, there was an advance of 11 cents per hundredweight in basic prices.

L. M. DAVIS,  
*Division of Dairy and Poultry Products, B. A. E.*

#### THE EGG AND POULTRY MARKET SITUATION

The month of March on the egg markets found the expected but belated seasonal decline under full swing. The unusual feature of the situation was that the decline that usually occurs in February was delayed until a month later, with the result that both February and March price movements were just the reverse of the usual price trends for these months. February prices tended upward, due to extremely short receipts, while the usual thing is a marked decline. March prices tended sharply downward when the belated late winter and early spring flush began to be felt instead of showing the more normal slight advances.

From March 1 to March 23, reported values of firsts at New York declined about 18 cents per dozen. For the five previous years, the average change for this same period was an advance of about  $1\frac{3}{4}$  cents, and in none of these five years was a downward tendency registered. At the beginning of March this year, prevailing prices were about 18 cents higher than on the same date in 1928, and now toward the close of the month the level ranges from about the same as a year ago to slightly lower. Present prices are about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cents higher than for the same period in 1927, about the same as in 1926, and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 cents lower than in 1925.

The supply side of the market has been featured since late January by rather marked decreases in egg receipts as compared with a year ago. While January arrivals at the four leading terminal markets were 4 per cent heavier than in 1928, February receipts were 36 per cent less, a very marked decrease, even considering the fact that February in 1928 had an extra day and for that reason was not strictly comparable. Up to March 23, receipts continued lighter than for the same period in March, 1928, by about 10 per cent. From the first of January to this date, receipts have totaled slightly more than 16 per cent lighter than in 1928. The increase in January was significant as showing increased shipments of storage eggs from interior points to the terminal markets, and the decrease in February and March showed the effects of prolonged cold weather and widespread heavy snows in important producing sections. Smaller numbers of hens on farms was thought to be a contributing factor but was probably at least partially offset by relatively favorable feed prices.

It is obvious that the egg-production season is later than usual by as much as two to four weeks in different parts of the country. The question confronting the egg-market operator is what will be the egg production when the spring flush is finally under full swing. Many believe that receipts later on will be sufficient to make up the deficiency to date compared with last year, others that numbers of hens are smaller than last year by an extent sufficient to keep production, and hence receipts, at a level consistently below 1928. But the season has not yet advanced far enough to give any evidence of a trend either way, so it is still an open question.

Storage holdings are now definitely on the increase. As expected on account of the lateness of the season in other respects, the into-storage movement began several weeks later than a year ago. In 1928, movement began about February 15. This year, the first in-movement was not seen until the second week in March in the Middle West and East, although as usual some early movement was seen on the Pacific coast. Even yet, many eastern cities report no material movement to the storage warehouses.

The poultry-market situation remains firm, with but little, if any, change from conditions seen earlier. Prices have been well maintained and are well above a year ago. Receipts have been running considerably lighter than in March, 1928, a factor that has been of much importance in keeping the market firm. It is not known whether the light receipts are a reflection of a desire to keep more birds in the laying flocks on account of the unusually high prices which prevailed until recently, or a result of smaller numbers available for possible shipment. Sentiment seems to lead toward the belief that, while both of these factors were of influence, the former was the more important one. Lighter storage holdings than a year ago also continue to be of importance in maintaining the prevailing firmness.

About the same situation is seen in the live-poultry markets. Receipts have been consistently lighter than in 1928. As a result, the market has been closely cleared at favorable prices to the live-poultry shipper. But in spite of this, there has been no response, as might be expected, in the way of larger shipments to market.

C. E. ECKLES,  
*Division of Dairy and Poultry Products, B. A. E.*

#### FARM POPULATION REACHES NEW LOW POINT

The farm population at the beginning of the year 1929, according to the annual estimate of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, turns out to be the smallest in 20 years, and in all probability (although an exact basis in the census before 1920 for an official estimate is lacking) in 30 years. The continued net loss in farm population, in the face of considerably improved economic conditions of agriculture lately, is considered to reflect the resolute character and great original momentum of the movement. Although the gross number of persons leaving the farms is somewhat smaller during the past two years, and the gross number returning to farms is a little larger, accompanied by a slightly declining net annual loss of farm population, still time will be necessary to allow readjustments which will check the present headway of the movement.

No one can understand the wide and constant roving and roaming of American farmers if he does not recall the fact that all Americans are descended from a race of migrants and emigrants. The United States census enumerators every 10 years ask what State of the Union each person was born in. The printed results are simply amazing. Virginians are found abundantly in every State. Missourians to the number of 150,000 are found in Oklahoma; next in order of numbers these Missourians invade Kansas; next, Illinois; next, California. California is packed with migrants from other States; Illinois leads the list with 100,000; Missouri follows; Iowa comes next; New York, Indiana, and Ohio are close on their heels. The farm States of the



Corn Belt have thus poured their population copiously into all other States, and in turn received back quotas from those States.

One is reminded, by these movements of people, of the eternal quest of human beings fabled in ancient lore, for the pot of gold at the foot of the rainbow; for the search of the Golden Fleece; for the quest of the Holy Grail—which all portray the restless, passionate pursuit of things which human beings long for and curiously suffer much to obtain. Farm people are not an exception. They go after what all humans go after. As the waters flow into lakes, thence into larger lakes, thence into the seas and oceans; so streams of farm-bred youth always have and probably always will flow to towns, from towns to larger towns, from larger towns to cities, from cities to metropolises. Some one has defined the farm as a place where children are born and grow; a city as a place where people go from farms, live a little while, and then die; the country as a land of children and hope, the city as a place of adults and the burnt-out ashes of human desire.

Whatever the truth of these definitions, certain it is that a rather fixed percentage of farm youth do, will, and must, so far as we can foresee, go to cities as a normal thing. All that fathers and mothers can do in the circumstances is to make sure that the right ones go and the right ones stay on the farm.

The more disturbing thing, however, is that others go to cities than farm youth. Whole families sometimes go. In bad times for farming—like the last eight years—the exodus becomes a panic, almost a rout. Cities get filled up with people out of work. Adjustment to city life is found difficult, slow, discouraging. Then start little journeys back to the farm again. The farm looks mighty good to a family that has been living in close quarters on scanty rations for a year or two.

In a recent survey by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics of 20,000 farmers living in every State of the Union who had left farms for cities during the last eight years it was found that the following were the reasons for leaving:

Seven thousand five hundred went on account of small profits and high taxes on the farm.

Five thousand went because old age was creeping up and help on the farm was scarce.

Two thousand two hundred went to get adequate schooling for their children.

Four hundred went because they were giving the home farm up to sons and sons-in-law.

Five hundred went because they had saved enough money to go and obtain in cities what they had always craved and couldn't get on the farm.

Four thousand four hundred gave many scattering reasons hard to classify.

There in brief is the unadorned story of 20,000 farm operators whose families totaled over 100,000 persons.

There is one plain lesson in this rather remarkable movement of whole families away from farming. It is this: No farmer ought in the prime of life to be compelled to give up his occupation and take his children to towns or cities for proper schooling. In this day and age, public elementary schools and high schools should, without the shadow of an argument, be within easy reach from every farm—

schools modern in every respect, just as good as the town provides. When we find 2,200 farmers with growing children giving up farming and going to cities because their farming communities do not provide modern education, we know that there is something wrong there besides low prices and high taxes. It is due every American child that he have an American type of general education, without its disturbing and disrupting basic occupations. Merchants don't have to give up storekeeping in order to educate their children properly; nor do bankers, nor lawyers, nor carpenters, nor plumbers. Why should farmers?

Whether the continued going down of the number of people living on farms is a barometer of fair or stormy weather for farming, probably no one knows. At any rate, down this barometer seems still to be dropping. It is the hope of everyone, however, that fair weather is close at hand.

#### I. MOVEMENTS TO AND FROM FARMS

[Births and deaths not taken into account]

During year	Persons leaving farms for cities	Persons arriving at farms and cities	Net movement from farms to cities
1922-----	<sup>1</sup> 2, 000, 000	<sup>1</sup> 880, 000	<sup>1</sup> 1, 120, 000
1923-----	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
1924-----	<sup>1</sup> 2, 075, 000	<sup>1</sup> 1, 396, 000	<sup>1</sup> 679, 000
1925-----	<sup>1</sup> 1, 900, 000	<sup>1</sup> 1, 066, 000	<sup>1</sup> 834, 000
1926-----	<sup>1</sup> 2, 155, 000	<sup>1</sup> 1, 135, 000	<sup>1</sup> 1, 020, 000
1927-----	<sup>1</sup> 1, 978, 000	<sup>1</sup> 1, 374, 000	<sup>1</sup> 604, 000
1928-----	<sup>1</sup> 1, 960, 000	<sup>1</sup> 1, 362, 000	<sup>1</sup> 598, 000

<sup>1</sup> Estimated.

<sup>2</sup> No estimate.

#### II. FARM POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Year	Number
Jan. 1, 1910-----	32,076,960 (estimated, U. S. census).
Jan. 1, 1920-----	31,614,269 (enumerated, U. S. census). <sup>1</sup>
	31,000,000 (estimated). <sup>2</sup>
Jan. 1, 1921-----	30,600,000 (estimated). <sup>3</sup>
Jan. 1, 1922-----	30,200,000 (estimated). <sup>3</sup>
Jan. 1, 1923-----	29,800,000 (estimated). <sup>3</sup>
Jan. 1, 1924-----	29,400,000 (estimated). <sup>3</sup>
Jan. 1, 1925-----	28,981,668 (enumerated, U. S. census).
Jan. 1, 1926-----	28,541,000 (estimated).
Jan. 1, 1927-----	27,892,000 (estimated).
Jan. 1, 1928-----	27,699,000 (estimated).
Jan. 1, 1929-----	27,511,000 (estimated).

<sup>1</sup> This number, 31,614,269, includes all persons living on farms and also the members of farm laborers' families living in the country but not on farms.

<sup>2</sup> In order to make the number of farm population of 1920 comparable with that of 1925, the above-mentioned members of farm laborers' families (estimated at 614,269 persons) are subtracted.

<sup>3</sup> The loss of farm population between 1920 and 1925, calculated as the difference between 31,000,000 and 29,000,000 (round numbers) was averaged for the 5 years at 400,000 per year, and so the farm population for this year was obtained by subtracting 400,000 from the farm population of the previous year.



## III. RECENT LOSSES IN FARM POPULATION

During period or calendar year	Net loss of farm population in United States <sup>1</sup>
1910-1920 -----	463,000 (estimated).
1920-1925 -----	2,000,000 (from U. S. census enumerations).
1925 -----	441,000 (estimated).
1926 -----	649,000 (estimated).
1927 -----	193,000 (estimated).
1928 -----	188,000 (estimated).

<sup>1</sup> Net loss is number of persons leaving farms for cities added to number of persons who died, and from this sum is taken number of persons going to farms from cities added to number of births.

C. J. GALPIN,  
*Division of Farm Population and Rural Life, B. A. E.*

## THE POTATO SITUATION

Market supplies of potatoes are reported still rather moderate in many consuming centers, although shipments have become heavy, amounting to an average of over 900 cars daily since the middle of March. Demand is slow in most markets, and price changes slant downward. The low returns to producers tend to lessen activity in the Upper Lakes region, where holdings of old potatoes are liberal. There are still considerable local supplies near consuming centers, tending to reduce the demand for car-lot shipments, which have been less than last season so far by about one-fifth.

The conditions are much the same as in the spring of 1925 when there were large holdings in storage from a heavy crop of late potatoes. Acreage of the southern crop was reduced and new potatoes brought fairly satisfactory prices, but old stock continued to sell at low levels, although there was a final upturn in May. This spring, with nearly a third of the crop still on hand in March, there was plainly not much to encourage expectation of any important price upturn for old potatoes; instead, the market sagged back 5 to 20 cents in March to about the lowest levels of the season. The recent Chicago car-lot prices around 65 cents per 100 pounds sacked, on round white varieties, compare with 85 cents in early March, and with about 65 cents at the low point on good stock last October. Highest level in the Chicago market this season was \$1.35, quoted last September. The Chicago price range during March of last season was \$2 to \$2.20; in March, 1927, it was \$1.75 to \$2.25; in March, 1926, it was \$3.75 to \$4.75.

In 1924-25, that other season of record-breaking production, the price range in March, 1925, was 90 cents to \$1.10, followed by further decline to 65 to 95 cents in April and then a final recovery in May and June, reaching top of \$2 for a short time, owing to damage to the early crop from frost and dry weather. Aside from the mere possibility of such happenings late this year, the notable feature in the comparison of the present season with that of 1924-25 is that the large 1924 crop was followed by two or three seasons of lighter production and higher prices.

Some growers made no complaint, even this season. A report from one of the smaller eastern markets records sales of superior home-grown potatoes at 90 cents per bushel. This is about three times the price that growers in northern Maine or in western New York were receiving for bulk stock at shipping points and the general range of eastern prices looks higher beside 30 cents per 100 pounds paid to growers in the more distant producing sections. Some of the producers remote from the large markets concluded that it did not pay to haul potatoes at such prices while hogs bring \$12 per 100 pounds and dairy cows show a good yield of milk when fed moderate rations of potatoes. It is likely that more than the usual quantity of potatoes will be fed to livestock so long as the prices of meats and dairy products remain near recent levels.

Trade in seed potatoes was more active during March. Probably some southern growers have been doing considerable last-minute planting since they heard that other producers were cutting down acreage. Sales of northern seed potatoes in some sections as last reported are only slightly less than last season to date.

Early potato acreage is being reduced about 27 per cent, according to estimates and reports of intentions to plant issued March 18. The indicated acreage of the early and second-early crop of about 294,000 acres would be about 100,000 acres less than that of a year ago and decidedly less than for any recent season. Reduction of acreage in the second-early sections including States from New Jersey west to Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, and Nebraska, are not so great as in the early shipping States, but still indicate the lightest planting in six years in the eight second-early States as a group. The percentage of reduction ranges from 10 per cent in New Jersey to as high as 25 to 30 per cent in Kaw Valley, Kansas, and in Oklahoma.

Present information suggests a probable cut of 10 to 11 per cent in total acreage of potatoes. The expected reduction seems to be less severe as the planting season moves northward. Some of the north-eastern main-crop States probably will reduce acreage only a little, the growers depending on nearness to market to help them in case of overproduction. But the very heavy per-acre yield of 1928 is scarcely expected again this season; for one reason, sales of fertilizer have been lighter. Heavy supplies of old potatoes are likely to affect the general market somewhat, during the next two months, but the acreage reduction of one-fourth in the earliest shipping sections will relieve the situation, tending to prevent extremely low prices on new potatoes for the present.

The planting time was a little late in the second-early region north of Florida and Texas. Delay and overlapping of this kind have sometimes brought on a spell of rather heavy shipments in early summer. From midsummer onward, assuming average crop weather, the conditions indicated may result in market supplies no greater than usual at that season.

G. B. FISKE,  
*Division of Fruits and Vegetables, B. A. E.*

---

### THE SPRING WHEAT OUTLOOK

Farmers reported an intention to decrease the acreage of all spring wheat in 1929 about 0.4 of 1 per cent from the acreage harvested in 1928. In the four principal hard spring wheat States, Minnesota,

North Dakota, South Dakota, and Montana, there is an intended increase of about 1,027,000 acres, or 8.8 per cent, in the acreage of hard spring wheat and an intended decrease of 1,309,000 acres, or 19.5 per cent, in durum wheat. This indicated decrease in durum wheat, if carried out, would result in an acreage of 5,400,000 and, with average yields, in a production of 66,000,000 bushels, a decrease of about 29 per cent from the production last year. Excluding the durum acreage in the four spring wheat States, the indicated area to be seeded to all spring wheat in the United States in 1929 is 16,000,000 acres. With average yields of 12.9 bushels, this acreage would result in a production of 207,000,000 bushels compared with 231,000,000 bushels last year.

#### DURUM WHEAT

The average price of all subclasses and grades of durum wheat to date this year have ranged about 25 cents below those for the corresponding period last year, and about 20 cents below the average price of all subclasses and grades of hard red spring wheat. The comparatively low prices for durum wheat, which have prevailed for the 1928 crop, account in large measure for the indicated intention to shift from durum to hard red spring wheat. If the intended decrease in acreage of durum is carried out, the position of the durum wheat producer is likely to be improved, although domestic prices will still be determined by world conditions. The prevailing low price of durum may result in some decrease in acreage in Canada this year. Wheat acreage in North Africa and Italy is probably about the same as last year; although there has been some damage caused by the severe winter, the general condition of the crop at this time is reported to be favorable.

#### HARD SPRING WHEAT

Crop and market developments, since the outlook report was issued in January, do not indicate any material change in the prospective situation of the spring wheat grower. Although the total disappearance of wheat to date has been large, due in large measure to low prices, the supply of wheat at the close of the season, June 30, will still be considerably above that of last year. Supplies available for export in the principal surplus-producing countries, excluding Russia, on March 1 were larger than last year. Stocks on farms, in country mills and elevators and commercial channels in the United States on March 1 totaled 357,000,000 bushels or an increase of about 73,000,000 bushels over the corresponding period a year ago. Stocks of Canadian grain in Canada and United States are also larger, being about 18,000,000 bushels above March 1, 1928.

World shipments of all wheat since July 1 have been larger than the shipments for the same period last season, largely as a result of greater consumption due to low prices. Despite a considerably larger crop in Europe, European imports have been running nearly as large as last year. Total wheat acreage in Europe is slightly below last year's acreage, and reports indicate the severe winter there has caused some damage to winter grain in certain countries but it is too early yet to determine the extent of the damage.

While it is too early at this time to determine what the final outcome of the hard red winter crop will be, there has been no indication to date that the abandonment this year will be above average. With average abandonment and average yields, a winter wheat crop of



570,000,000 bushels would be produced. Spring wheat farmers should watch for the April winter wheat report and be guided by it in determining whether to increase the acreage of hard spring wheat. Should the intended increase in acreage of hard red spring wheat of 8.8 per cent be carried out and average yields be obtained, a production of hard red spring wheat only slightly less than in 1928 would result. Such a production, with an average winter wheat crop, would be large enough to produce an exportable surplus of the lower qualities of spring wheat.

(From report of this bureau, issued March 25, 1929.)

---

### THE FLAX OUTLOOK

Farmers reported an intention to increase the acreage of flax in 1929 about 10 per cent above the acreage harvested in 1928. Of the four important flax States which produced 95 per cent or more of our flax, Minnesota and South Dakota, indicate decreases of about 15 per cent each, while North Dakota and Montana report intended increases of 30 and 65 per cent respectively over their harvested acreages in 1928.

Should these intentions be carried out, 2,990,000 acres would be seeded. This acreage, with yields equivalent to the last 10-year average, would produce around 23,000,000 bushels. Even with yields 25 per cent higher than the 10-year average, around 30,000,000 bushels would be produced, which is considerably below domestic consumption which was 45,000,000 bushels last year.

The short crop of flax in the United States in 1928 has resulted in reduced stocks and increased imports. Stocks are from 6,000,000 to 8,000,000 bushels less than last year, and shipments from Argentina to the United States from January 1 to March 23, 1929, were 8,546,000 bushels as compared with 4,450,000 bushels for the corresponding period last year. More linseed oil moved into consuming channels during the quarter ended December, 1928, than for any preceding fall quarter for which data are available, and stocks on hand on January 1 were the smallest for that date since 1925. Domestic prices for both seed and oil have also advanced.

Shipments of Argentine seed to Europe to date have been heavy, indicating a continued strong European demand. It now seems probable that competition from foreign seed, when the 1929 domestic crop is ready for market, will not be any greater than last season, notwithstanding the large Argentine crop now being marketed.

In view of this prospect, farmers who have land suitable for producing flax are justified in increasing their acreage of flax this year. In fact they probably will find it advantageous to increase considerably beyond their indicated intentions of 10 per cent, since flax with average yields promises to be a more profitable crop than spring wheat, oats and barley grown for market, in the same area and under the same conditions.

(From report of this bureau, issued March 25, 1929.)

---

### THE CORN OUTLOOK

Reports of intentions to plant indicate that farmers are expecting to decrease their corn acreage slightly this year. The principal decrease reported is in the eastern and central part of the Corn Belt.



Increases are intended in the western part of the Corn Belt, in the North Atlantic States, and the far Western States, and only slight changes in the South. Should these intentions be carried out and should yields equal to the average of the past 10 years be obtained, a crop of 2,810 million bushels would be produced. This would be about 1 per cent smaller than the 1928 crop of 2,840 million bushels.

Total stocks of corn on March 1 were 1,056 million bushels, which was 10 million bushels more than a year ago. With fewer hogs to feed and more plentiful supplies of other feed grains, it is likely that the domestic disappearance of corn from March 1 until November 1 will be considerably below that of the corresponding period of 1928. While exports during the first four months of this season have been much greater than in the corresponding months of last season, and while they may continue above last year, it is not expected that these will offset the decrease in domestic consumption. Consequently the carry-over into next year may be expected to be considerably greater than the carry-over into the present season.

Prices of corn of the 1928 crop have been supported by a strong export demand, reflecting a short corn crop in Europe, and reported low yields in Argentina. The strong export demand, together with the large number of hogs fed during the first part of the season and the early feeding of the new crop, has maintained prices at relatively high levels thus far this season.

Such a combination of circumstances is unlikely for the new crop. Indeed so many hogs to feed early in the season and so complete an exhaustion of stocks of old corn are almost out of the question. Should reported intentions to plant corn be carried out and should average yields be obtained, somewhat larger supplies are likely to be available in the United States on November 1, 1929, than were available November 1, 1928. With smaller domestic feeding requirements in prospect early in the season, this would probably result in a less favorable market for corn grown for sale in the principal surplus regions than has been the case for the 1927 and 1928 crops. Given average yields, an even greater reduction in acreage would be necessary to maintain prices at the levels of the past two seasons.

(From report of this bureau, issued March 25, 1929.)

---

### THE HAY OUTLOOK

Farmers have expressed an intention of increasing their acreage of tame hay to be cut in 1929 by 2.7 per cent above 1928. Should these plans be carried out, the total acreage to be cut in 1929 will amount to 59,300,000 acres, which is larger than the acreage in either 1926 or 1928, but still 1,500,000 acres below the peak acreage of 1927. While the intended increase in acreage is general in all sections except the North Atlantic, it is most marked in the East North Central States, where winterkilling of alfalfa and clover was material last year. Farmers in the alfalfa producing States of the Great Plains area plan only about a 1 per cent increase in acreage.

With average yields on the intended acreage for the United States, a production of 89,000,000 tons would result. This would be slightly less than the 5-year (1922-1926) average crop of 91,000,000 tons, and less than the 93,000,000 tons cut in 1928. The market supplies of good quality hay from the 1928 crop continue to move at relatively

high prices, in spite of a total production somewhat above average. This has been due to the low quality of the crop in many localities and has caused the exceptionally heavy feeding requirements during the winter in the States west of the Mississippi River. It appears that the carry-over of old hay will be low when the new crop is cut.

In view of the probable small carry-over of old hay, and even with an average yield on the intended acreage, hay prices for the 1929 crop will probably be higher than for similar-sized crops in recent years. Since this shortage is most evident in the alfalfa hay shipping States, the market prices of good quality alfalfa hay may be relatively higher than for other classes of tame hay of similar quality.

The relatively high prices paid for all classes of hay in all the western States, being due to the heavy feed requirements, can not be expected to prevail for the 1929 crop, unless drought conditions followed by a hard winter are repeated.

The intended increase in tame-hay acreage in the North Central States probably consists of clover seeded in the spring of 1928. Average yields on the present intended acreage for 1929 will result in sufficiently increased production to provide a surplus of market grades of hay in these States as contrasted with the present shortage.

(From report of this bureau, issued March 25, 1929.)

#### THE TOBACCO OUTLOOK

Tobacco acreage will be increased approximately 4 per cent, according to reports on intended plantings. This net increase results from a heavy increase in the intended acreage of Burley and less important increases in most other air-cured types, increases in most of the fire-cured types and cigar-filler types, no appreciable change in cigar types other than filler, and a slight decrease in flue-cured acreage.

*Flue-cured.*—Farmers report an intention to decrease the acreage of flue-cured tobacco by a little more than 3 per cent. There is an oversupply of this type; the supply on July 1, 1928, was the greatest on record. Prices during the early part of the marketing season last year were very low, but improved sharply before the season was over. This improvement was in large part due to exceptionally heavy buying for Chinese interests. It is now reported that large Chinese stocks were built up in anticipation of increases in import duties which did not materialize, and these stocks are likely to depress the exports of flue-cured tobacco to that country in 1929. There is consequently a strong possibility that the total exports of this type in 1929 will be less than those of 1928. In view of the relatively light yield per acre in 1928, the smaller acreage indicated might easily result in a larger crop in 1929.

The domestic stocks of flue-cured tobacco on July 1, 1929, are likely to equal, if not exceed, those of last July, and with only a 3 per cent decrease in acreage the prospect for improved prices this year is not good. A further element of danger in the outlook for flue-cured tobacco is the intended increase in the acreage of Burley.

*Burley.*—Farmers report an intention to increase the acreage of Burley 22 per cent. The acreage in 1928 was 336,000 acres, and the intended acreage as reported is 410,000 acres, or about 40,000 acres greater than has ever been planted to Burley heretofore. This acreage would be sufficient to produce from 325 to 350 million pounds of tobacco and effect a sharp reduction in prices to growers. A



smaller acreage than is indicated by present intentions would, with normal yields, produce ample tobacco for consumption requirements and result in better returns per acre.

*Maryland.*—The intended increase of about 3 per cent in this type is amply justified by the supply situation.

*One Sucker.*—An intention to increase the acreage of One Sucker by 14 per cent is reported. Foreign and domestic demand for this type is diminishing, and there is no apparent justification for this increase.

*Green River.*—Intended plantings of Green River tobacco amount to 40,000 acres, an increase of 21 per cent compared with 1928. Consumption of this type has declined sharply in recent years and will probably continue downward. While the price outlook is excellent for a crop of about the same size as was produced last year, an increase of 21 per cent in acreage might easily result in prices considerably below last year.

*Virginia sun-cured.*—An intention to decrease acreage 14 per cent from last year is reported. This decrease is probably greater than is necessary. The supply situation appears to be favorable, and the low prices of 1928 were apparently due to poor quality of the tobacco rather than to oversupply.

*Virginia fire-cured.*—An intention to decrease acreage 3 per cent is reported. The supply situation is favorable notwithstanding the diminishing consumption of fire-cured tobacco, and this slight decrease should improve the price outlook.

*Paducah and Clarksville-Hopkinsville.*—Reports on intended plantings show intentions to increase Paducah acreage 22 per cent and Clarksville-Hopkinsville acreage 7 per cent. Consumption of these types is decreasing, and a smaller acreage than the 156,000 acres intended is advisable.

*Henderson stemming.*—Reports indicate an intention to increase acreage of this type from 7,500 acres in 1928 to 8,500 acres in 1929, or about 13 per cent. Consumption is declining steadily, and an increased acreage does not appear warranted.

*Cigar types.*—An intended increase of 4 per cent in cigar tobacco is reported, confined almost entirely to filler types produced in Pennsylvania and Ohio. In Pennsylvania, an intention to increase acreage 5 per cent is indicated, and in Ohio 17 per cent. In New England, New York, and Wisconsin, no change in acreage is reported, except that there may be a slight increase in acreage under shade in the Connecticut Valley, with a corresponding reduction in stalk-cut. A decrease of about 10 per cent in the intended acreage of shade-grown tobacco in Georgia and Florida has been indicated by trade sources of information.

(From report of this bureau, issued March 25, 1929.)

---

### THE SWEET-POTATO OUTLOOK

Growers report that they intend to plant an acreage of sweet potatoes 6 per cent larger than that harvested last year. The acreage intended is, however, considerably less than farmers intended to plant last year, and allowing for usual loss of acreage and for usual difficulty in setting, the acreage harvested seems more likely to decrease than to increase, except in the important commercial sweet-potato States.

Moderate increases are reported as intended in the Eastern Shore area, North Carolina, and Tennessee. New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland report little change, and the total acreage intended in these six States, which ordinarily supply nearly three-fourths of the car-lot shipments of sweet potatoes, is 206,000 acres, compared with 197,000 acres harvested last year, an intended increase of less than 5 per cent. In these States the acreage grown is usually fairly close to the acreage reported as intended, but, with a moderate acreage expected elsewhere, the proposed increase is not unreasonable.

Farther south, where sweet potatoes are grown chiefly for home use and local sale, the acreage planted is more largely dependent on weather conditions, but present reports seem to indicate that if the average difficulty with weather conditions is experienced, the acreage finally harvested would be less than that harvested last season and perhaps even less than that harvested in 1926. If this reduction takes place, returns from sweet potatoes in these Southern States would probably be substantially better than they were either last year or the year before.

(From report of this bureau, issued March 25, 1929.)

### THE CABBAGE OUTLOOK

The reported January intentions of growers of the earliest crop in California, Florida, Texas, and Louisiana indicated that an increase of less than 10 per cent would be made, but later reports on plantings show that the increase was approximately 17 per cent, with combined plantings in Florida and Texas the heaviest since 1922. Early States commenced shipments under improved conditions with regard to storage holdings of old cabbage; however, this increase of 17 per cent in acreage more than offsets the advantage of the light holdings of old stock, with the result that prices to growers are now lower than last year.

January intentions in the second-early cabbage States were for an increase of 24 per cent. Plantings in this group of States, however, are now estimated to be 37 per cent above the 1928 acreage. The outlook in January pointed to the strong possibility of considerably reduced prices if the intended acreage increases were made. The additional increase disclosed in the estimate of actual plantings adds to the probability of lower returns to growers.

In view of the heavy plantings in the early Southern States, growers in the intermediate cabbage States, from New Jersey and Maryland west to the Mississippi Valley, were advised in the January outlook report to reduce their acreage by 5 per cent or about equal to that of 1927. Growers in this intermediate group have since reported their intentions of decreasing acreage only 2 per cent. With the heavier increases in the earlier States, the intended decrease in the intermediate States does not appear sufficient to sustain even the low level of 1928 prices.

Years of high prices to northern growers, such as last year, have generally been followed by marked increases in acreage. The high price last year was largely due to low yield. Even if there is no increase in the northern late cabbage acreage, average yields on such acreage are certain to result in markedly lower prices to the growers this year.

(From report of this bureau, issued March 25, 1929.)